



**UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN HOSPITALS AND HEALTH CENTERS
FACILITIES PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Memo for Record

THROUGH: Robert C. Harris, PE
Facilities Director 

FROM: Heather Graham Lewis, AIA
Manager, Architectural Services 

DATE: July 20, 2011

SUBJECT: Furniture arrangements in multi-person offices

This memo shall document the code research that has gone into creating a UMHHC Facilities Planning and Development standard drawing, entitled “Standard Multi-Person Office Aisle Clearances”, which is currently posted on the FPD website at <http://www.med.umich.edu/facilities/planningdevelopment/ae/doc/detail/a/D06410H-8.pdf>

This drawing is a simplification, to illustrate typical furniture arrangement. The furniture arrangement depicts staff-only areas (either Business occupancy or un-separated Business occupancy within an Inpatient occupancy) with multiple workstations, with aisles less than 30 feet long.

The aisle dimensions of the furniture arrangements shown in the drawing actually exceed both the Michigan Building Code 2009 and the MiOSHA General Industry Safety Standards, Part 6, Requirements for Fire Exiting.

MBC 2009, section 1017, permits aisles to be 28” wide in non-public areas with fewer than 50 people, and defines the edge of the aisle to be measured 19” from the edge of the table or counter, to account for the depth of the chair. Therefore, back—to—back workstations, with counters on opposite walls, could have as little as 66” clear between the edges of the counters and meet MBC.

MiOSHA Part 6, Rule 641, requires the minimum exit access to be at least equal to the required width of the exit to which it leads, but not less than 34”. There is no mention of additional requirements for movable furniture, such as chairs. As other locations within this document allow the exit width to be as narrow as 28”, it appears the intention is that the “exit access” is intended to start outside a room, not within the room.

I have met with Jacqueline Jeffery, the AEC Code Specialist, Ian Steinman, University Fire Marshall and Greg Masters, Fire Inspector at OSEH to confirm the above.